



February 26, 2019

Representative Helm, Chair  
House Committee on Energy and the Environment

Re: Trout Unlimited Comments on HB 2854

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB) 2854. My name is Chandra Ferrari and I represent Trout Unlimited (TU), a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. TU has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon.

TU opposes HB 2854 in its current form. TU strongly supports solutions that will help Oregon achieve timely, broad-scale water measurement of surface and groundwater diversions in the state. Climate change and drought conditions and projections for increased frequency of such events highlight the need for Oregon to have current, accurate information on how much water is being used throughout the State. An increased understanding of water use through more accurate measurement will result in many benefits to a diverse range of stakeholders including improved water rights administration, improved understanding of available water supplies, better means to protect senior water rights and ability to efficiently manage and use water during times of drought.

TU appreciates that HB 2854 seeks a pathway to elevate substantive discussions about water measurement and reporting. TU has been engaging in discussions on this topic with a diverse range of stakeholders and we understand that there are several issues regarding broad-scale measurement and reporting that would benefit from focused dialogue. TU certainly supports constructive dialogue on this topic and is willing to engage with all stakeholders interested in developing timely solutions. However, TU does not believe that HB 2854, without amendment, is the best vehicle for those discussions. In particular, TU believes that HB 2854 lacks specificity regarding the purpose of the Task Force, membership requirements and specific deliverables.

TU recommends that HB 2854 be amended to reflect the recommendations below.

- (1) The bill should more specifically describe the purpose of the bill. TU suggests the purpose is to advance broad-scale measurement and reporting in the state. To do so, the bill should note that the Task Force will identify possible solutions to address significant concerns identified by in and out-of-stream water users.

- (2) Related to (1), HB 2854 should include additional information regarding what the report produced by the Task Force should contain. TU suggests it contains recommendations for advancing timely, broad-scale measurement in the state including possible solutions to address concerns.
- (3) The bill should ensure balanced representation on the Task Force. TU suggests that the task force should include an equal number of members representing in-stream and out-of-stream uses all which are required to have an understanding of water management. Additionally, the Task Force should strive to achieve consensus. The Task Force should develop a process to move forward and document dissenting opinions should consensus not be possible.

While TU has concerns with HB 2854, we strongly support concrete and focused discussions on this topic occurring in some forum and we are happy to engage in any future discussions and/or processes established with the intent of timely advancing this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2854.



Chandra Ferrari  
Senior Policy Advisor  
[cferrari@tu.org](mailto:cferrari@tu.org)